

## NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



# VSO AND FSO COMPLETE AMERICAN LEGION TRAINING

Courtney VanZanten, Veterans Service Officer for Lake County and the American Legion Department of South Dakota, and Kevin Bowen, Field Service Officer for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs; attended the annual National American Legion Department Service Officer training conference this past week.

There were a total of 125 participants from across the United States in Indianapolis for the training. Along with the training and the testing, participants had the opportunity to tour the national headquarters for the American Legion.



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# MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY WHITLOCK

Whether you're 5,15, 30, or 50 years of age, or older, the State Fair always promises a great time for all that attend.

Face it, the State Fair is unlike anything that has ever existed. Where else can you inhale a huge plate of fried food while walking toward the carnival rides? Where else can you have a corn dog for your main entree and funnel cake for desert? Where else can you get anything fried on a stick? Where else can you watch grandstand performances and get up on stage for a little Karaoke? Where else can you visit a car show, tractor show, goat tying, arm wrestling, and play arcade games all within a few blocks of each other?

Where else can you be right next to celebrities and political candidates and take selfies with them? Where else can you shop, learn, and connect with old friends while tracking five miles on your walk app? The list goes on and so does the fun!

The Fair also provides great opportunities for veterans. We may not be serving up fried pickles, cotton candy, kettle corn, or turkey legs, but we'll have a building full of experts that can answer veterans questions on disability, compensation, healthcare, long term care, home loans, rehabilitation and education, employment and training programs, pension, and



death benefits. The Veterans Building, located on Flag Avenue, will be filled with veterans who served, and continue to serve, as they dedicate their lives to enhancing the lives of our veterans. We're just a stones throw away from the midway and our team will be available from 10:00 am – 4:30 pm each day of the Fair.

On Wednesday and Thursday evenings during the Red Wilk Construction Tuff Hedeman Bull Bash, Red and his team will be honoring some very special heroes. Being a Vietnam Veteran himself, he knows the importance of honoring veterans for the sacrifices they have made for their country. Over the years, Red has honored 100 plus veterans from all over South Dakota.

The State Fair is dedicating Thursday, August 29, as a "salute to veterans." The day affords all veterans free gate admission and a day of recognition. Governor Noem and I will be sharing our messages with veterans on the Freedom Stage at 10:30 am and will also be available to visit with our great heroes after the program.

A trip to the state fair is a tradition families have passed on from generation to generation. Hope to see you there! I'll be in the food court!

## VA AND HIRING OUR HEROES FORM PARTNERSHIP

The U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes initiative, recently joined efforts to lead and support military spouse employment at VA and throughout the federal government, and reduce the high unemployment rate for military spouses.



**Hiring Our Heroes** 

Effective July 29, this initiative is part of both Secretary Wilkie's priority of improving the customer and employee experience, as well as the Department of Defense's (DOD) priority of retaining service members and supporting military families.

As one of only 10 federal agencies and the only VA entity that is a member of DOD's <u>Military Spouse Employment Partnership</u> (MSEP), the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) — with the support of the Veterans Experience Office (VEO) and Office of Human Resources and Administration (HR&A) — will lead the effort focusing on the experience, skills and values that military spouses bring to their jobs such as resiliency, agil-

ity, global citizenship and unique understanding of the challenges of the Veterans and their families.

"This type of intergovernmental collaboration to promote the hiring and retention of military spouses, is important not only for current servicemen and women and their families, but also for Veterans and their families," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Military spouses bring a unique perspective to the federal workplace, and I am proud that VA is leading the charge in this area."

The effort will encourage both the use of the military spouse hiring authority — as well as federal government participation in MSEP — and lever-



age best practices to improve the employee experience and achieve a successful, collective impact, for this population. As VA's representative, the Board's best practices will serve as an example for other government agencies who wish to hire, retain and promote military spouses.

### DISABILITY RATING SCHEDULE

As of August 11, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updated portions of the <u>VA Schedule for</u> <u>Rating Disabilities</u> (VASRD, or Rating Schedule) that evaluate infectious diseases, immune disorders and nutritional deficiencies.

The collection of federal regulations used by the Veterans Benefits Administration helps claims processors evaluate the severity of disabilities and assign disability ratings.

"The VA is in the process of updating all 15 body systems of the VASRD to more accurately reflect modern medicine and provide veterans with clearer rating decisions," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "By updating the rating schedule, veterans receive decisions based on the most current medical knowledge of their condition."

The complete list of updates to the rating schedule is available <u>online</u>. Claims pending prior to August 11, will be considered under both the old and new rating criteria, and whichever criteria is more favorable to a Veteran will be applied. Claims filed on or after August 11, will be rated under the new rating schedule.

Updating the rating schedule for conditions related to infectious diseases, immune disorders and nutritional deficiencies, enables VA claims processors to make more consistent decisions with greater ease and ensure veterans understand these decisions. The VA remains committed to improving its service to veterans continuously and staying at the forefront of modern medicine as it has for decades.

Since September 2017, VA has updated the schedules for <u>dental and oral conditions</u>, <u>conditions related</u> to the endocrine system, gynecological conditions and disorders of the breast, the general rating formula <u>for diseases of the eye, skin conditions</u> and the <u>hematologic and lymphatic systems</u>.

# DEUTER RECOGNIZED FOR HIS SERVICE



For over six years, Terry Deuter has been displaying his "Whitlins Designs" at the smallest mall of America in Rochford.

Terry serves as the country veterans service officer for Haakon County and Jackson County, and uses this event as a great opportunity to also conduct outreach with veterans.

This year the "Quilts of Valor" presented Terry with a quilt and thanked him for his service, both





### VA/DOD PARTNERSHIP

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense's (DOD) Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) entered into a strategic partnership Aug. 12 to enhance VA's supply chain management modernization efforts.

This first step gives the VA networks across the country increased access to DLA's broader supply catalog; improving productivity and efficiency.

The agreement provides the VA access to DLA's worldwide procurement system to acquire medical and surgical items; cleaning supplies and equipment; construction materials and equipment; and other items needed to support veterans.



## DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY THE NATION'S COMBAT LOGISTICS SUPPORT AGENCY

"The adoption of a single health care logistics system by VA and DOD highlights the commitment of both organizations to improve military and veteran health care by increasing the access and quality of care they receive," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This is a huge step forward in our efforts to transform the VA into a modern, high-performing organization by simplifying operations and leveraging DOD's supply chain system to support our veterans.

The agreement combines resources from VA and DOD to create a centralized ordering system for VA, reducing risk, waste, fraud and abuse in purchasing medical equipment and supplies.

"On behalf of DOD, we are proud to be a value-add to VA on behalf of America's veterans," said Lt. Gen. Darrell K. Williams." Leveraging economies of scale, like the ones outlined in this agreement, help us reduce costs for the military services and other government partners like the VA."

In March, VA's Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center became the pilot site for DLA's Defense Medical Logistics Standard Support commodity ordering system.

For more information visit, <a href="https://www.dla.mil">https://www.dla.mil</a>.



#### VA LAUNCHPAD FOR VETERANS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently launched a new mobile application designed to save veterans and their caregivers time online.

<u>VA Launchpad for Veterans</u> simplifies and organizes several existing tools and resources into one convenient location to help manage health care needs.

"The VA has developed dozens of apps for veterans to take charge of their health care," said VA Secre-

tary Robert Wilkie. "VA Launchpad makes it easier to have these important tools available at your fingertips."

The VA Launchpad arranges all of the VA's apps into five categories for veterans: health management, health care team communication, vital health information sharing, mental health improvement and quality of life improvement. The new app enables veterans to access all the features with a single secure login.



The app also includes many mental health care and personal improvement tools for individuals who are not enrolled in VA health care services. These tools are free and do not require secure logins to use.

<u>VA Launchpad for Veterans</u> is available for download in the Apple App Store and <u>Google Play</u>. To access the VA's secure apps within VA Launchpad, users must be a VA patient and have one of the following accounts: Premium My HealtheVet, DS Logon Level 2 (Premium) or ID.me.

## SAVE THE DATE 09.24.2019

## Project Connect

Project Connect is a one-stop service center providing access to a variety of services for individuals and families who may need assistance in Pierre and Fort Pierre communities.

FREE TRANSPORTATION to and from Project Connect provided by River Cities Transit. Please call 605.945.2360 to pre-schedule your ride.

Faith Lutheran Church | 714 N. Grand Ave | Pierre | 3PM - 6PM

For more information contact Denise Albertson or Davis Schofield at 605.773.3181.

Volunteer | Reserve a Table for Your Agency | Learn More



## South Dakota Vietnam & Era Veterans Reunion

March 27-29, 2020 Dakota Sioux Casino & Hotel Watertown, SD. 1-800-658-4717, 605-882-2051

Registration Fee \$75.00 per person register by 2/1/2020

#### Send to Vietnam Vets Reunion PO Box 343 Watertown, SD 57201

Friday	Registration	4:00PM
Mar.27	Agent Orange Forum	7:00PM
Saturday Registration		9:00AM
28 Mar. Guest Speakers (TBA)		10:00AM
Lunch Soup & Sandwich		12:00PM
Agent Orange forum		1:00PM
Happy Hour		5:30PM
Banquet & Speaker		6-7:30 PM
Auction	•	8:00PM
Party time & Dance Casino Lounge		9:00PM-Close
Sunday Mar.29 Memorial Service		9:00AM

Name of Veteran	Branch of
Service	
Date of Service	
Name of Guest	
Contact Number for information 1	-605-881-6142

For Vendor permit: Linda Thompson <u>lindat@swo-nsn.gov</u> 605-698-8416



Tuesday, Sept. 3rd | 8am - 10am

Sioux Falls Ford - 4901 W 26th Street, Sioux Falls, SD 57106

## YOU ARE INVITED!

Come see and "SIGN A MESSAGE" on the famous High Five Tour Ford F-150 Raptor, Thanking our country's wounded heroes.

Wounded Warriors Family Support's High Five Tour is a road trip across America thanking our country's military families. The tour benefits WWFS's veteran programs. Wounded Warriors Family Support has earned Charity Navigator's highest four-star rating year after year. Learn more at HighFiveTour.com. Come out and meet Specialist Jack Gill, Vietnam War Veteran, the recipient of the 2018 Ford Raptor.

### SIOUX FALLS





Directions -

If traveling on I-229 North: Take I-229 North until it ends and turns into Jim Zweep Highway. Approximately a quarter mile north turn right onto Slip Up Creek Road. Follow Slip Up Creek Road until you see the entrance to the cemetery land.

If you're traveling on I-90: Whether traveling East or West on I-90 take the Cliff Avenue Exit (Exit 399) and head North. Travel North approximately three miles to 258<sup>th</sup> Street. Turn Right heading East on 258<sup>th</sup> St. Approximately two miles East turn right on to 477<sup>th</sup> Ave heading South. Travel South approximately one-and-a-half miles and the cemetery property will be on your right.

Good tip for the event —— please remind anyone attending to pack their lawn chairs for the groundbreaking. A limited amount of chairs will be available for the speakers and for those with mobility issues.



- Aug 17—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street)—9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
- Aug 17-18—Sioux Falls Air Show
- Aug 23—Higashi Ceremony—Meier Hall—Black Hills State University Campus (Yellow Jacket Lane)—Spearfish—10:00 am (MT)
- Aug 24—Lerew French Medal of Honor Ceremony—Methodist Church (1011 St. John Street)—Faulkton—10:30 am (CT)
- Aug 24—Traupel French Medal of Honor Ceremony—Veterans Park (1st and Main Street) Mitchell—4:00 pm (CT) Alternate address if weather issues—Corn Palace (601 N. Main)
- Aug 24—Wine and Gala Auction (Midwest Honor Flight Benefit)—Calico Skies Winery
- Aug 24-25—Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival
- Aug 24—Vietnam Veterans State Council Meeting—American Legion Post 8—Pierre—11:00 am (CT)
- Aug 26—Sioux Falls Barrel House (Midwest Honor Flight Benefit—10% all day to MWHF)—4701 E 54th Street
- Aug 26-29—SDDVA Benefit School—Ramkota—Pierre
- Aug 29—Veterans Day at the State Fair
- Aug 31—15th Annual 727th Transportation/DAV Poker Run—Swiftel Center—Brookings
- Sep 3—High Five Tour Ford 150 Raptor—Sioux Falls Ford (4901 W. 26th Street)—8:00—10:00 am (CT)
- Sep 9—SD State Veterans Cemetery Groundbreaking—9:00 am (CT)
- Sep 12—SD Veterans Commission Conf. Call Meeting—4:00 pm (CT)
- Sep 14—SDSU 2nd Annual Veterans Affairs Golf Tournament—Edgebrook Golf Course—Brookings—8:00 am (CT)
- Sep 21—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street)—9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
- Sep 21—Davison County Veterans Wellness and Benefit Fair—Mitchell Corn Palace—8:00 am—4:30 pm (CT)
- Sep 21—EAFB Health and Wellness Expo—Rushmore Mall—Rapid City—9:00 am—Noon (MT)
- Sep 21-22—SD American Legion Golf Tournament—Hartford Golf Course
- Sep 24—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 5 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—8:45 pm (CT)—doors open at 7:15 pm (CT)
- Nov 2—Second Annual Hangar Dance (Midwest Honor Flight Benefit)—Mid America Museum of Aviation—Sioux City, IA—7:00 pm (CT)
- Dec 3—Governor Noem's Budget Address
- Jan 14—State of the State Address
- Jan 15—SD Veterans Council Legislative Reception
- Mar 27-29 SD Vietnam and Era Veterans Reunion—Dakota Sioux Casino—Watertown

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military

South Dakota Department of the Military <a href="http://military.sd.gov">http://military.sd.gov</a>

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <a href="http://vetaffairs.sd.gov">http://vetaffairs.sd.gov</a>

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